

# MAMAC

Musée d'art moderne  
et d'art contemporain

Intervention by the French company Antipodes in front of one of the museum facades and *Wall drawing#1004 Arcs* by Sol LeWitt as part of *Mars aux Muses*, 2016 (March at the Museums).  
Photo Clémence Rigaud - © ADAGP Paris, 2019/ MAMAC, Nice

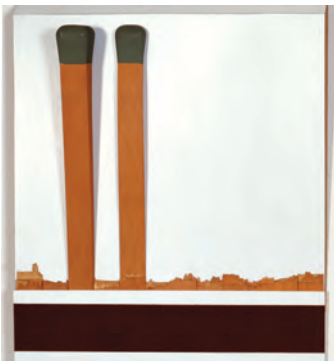


## GUIDE COLLECTIONS

## DISCOVER KEY WORKS FROM THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20th CENTURY

Located in the heart of Nice, MAMAC (Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art) was designed by architects Yves Bayard and Henri Vidal and opened in 1990. A rooftop terrace open to the public offers a breathtaking panoramic view of Nice. Its collection, rich of more than 1300 works from 300 artists, links regional and international artistic history.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> FLOOR NEW REALISM / POP ART The revolution of the 1960s



Raymond *Hains*, *Seita*, 1970  
Giant matchbook pouch in melamine and painted wood, canvas emery  
98 × 80 × 25 cm  
Mamac Collection, Nice, inv. 989.9.1.  
Bought with help of FRAM  
Photo Muriel Anssens, Ville de Nice – © ADAGP, Paris, 2019

The Constitutive Declaration of New Realism, written by the art critic Pierre Restany is signed at Yves Klein's, in Paris on October 27th 1960. However, it is during the previous decade that the artists have prepared the ground: Hains and Villeglé as early as 1949 "detach" together their firsts "lacerated posters"; Klein makes his firsts *Monochromes* and Tinguely his firsts animated sculptures...

1960 is a vivid year: Tinguely creates his first self-destructing machine in New York; Klein makes his "Anthropometries" and then the "Cosmogonies"; in Paris, César shows three compressed cars at the Salon de Mai and Arman fills the Iris Clert Gallery with waste, during the show entitled "The Full", etc.

The common traits to the New Realists are the refusal of abstraction, the awareness of a "modern nature": the one of the factory and of the city, of the advertisement, and of the mass-media, of the science and of the technique.

Anchored in this reality, their process echoes the brilliant analysis of the consumer society and its idols proposed in 1956 by Roland Barthes in his book *Mythologies*. The group engages the object in a new adventure, using the poetic aspect of the object: detritus, detaching of posters, assemblages, compressions or accumulations of elements coming from an industrial technology.

In 1961 the exhibition titled *The Art of Assemblage*, at the Museum of Modern Art of New York, consecrates the closeness of the New Realists with the Pop Art artists.

American Pop Art was built on the heritage of British Pop Art which came out of the *Independent Group* of which Lawrence Alloway was a leading member, and in 1956 he organised the *This is tomorrow* emblematic exhibition in London. On the American side, the movement broadly emerged through Neo-Dada artists Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns. Its core is in New York where artist such as Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein and Tom Wesselmann exhibited their art. Pop artists directly refer to consumer society and the damaging effects related to modern consumerist society. They advocated a return to reality, turning to the world of merchandise and new forms of popular cultures: stars of the cinema, advertising and comics, giving them an iconic and detached dimension, with American society's values as a backdrop.

#### NIKI DE SAINT PHALLE

*"I will create the biggest sculptures of my generation.*

*The biggest and most powerful, like those made by men."*

MAMAC holds one of the largest collections of Niki de Saint Phalle's work in the world: over 200 works, allowing them to change the works on display regularly. Niki de Saint Phalle (Neuilly-sur-Seine, France, 1930 – La Jolla, United States, 2002) made a work of art out of her life. Without any particular artistic education other than her instinct and a sort of certainty that this is her destiny, she devotes herself entirely to her work. Art for her was therapy and her artistic appetite helped her to overcome difficulties, highlight her sufferings and cope when faced with illness. "Champagne, glacier et fleurs", the title of a letter from 1979 which Niki de Saint Phalle wrote to her artist friend Marina Karella, sums up her personality which was both, strong, sensitive and charismatic. She was a rebel and chose to uses weapons, not to destroy but to create works of art. The first of these was created in 1961. "Tirs" [shootings],



Niki de Saint Phalle about to shoot  
Hand-tinted black and white photograph, from the film *Daddy*, 1972 © 2016 Niki Charitable Art Foundation, All rights reserved/Photo Peter Whitehead

was the series of works with which she gained recognition as an artist and gained, despite severe criticism, notoriety in France and quickly international. She also created original works by placing bags filled with paint on plaster-covered canvases and then shot at the canvases with a rifle. The work is shot at and the result is new creative piece. The artist expressed the rage and violence inside her in an outward gesture; she shot at her father who she was abused by at the age of 11, at her mother, and also at the Church society and all its injustices. Following her first *Tirs* exhibitions, the New Realists invited her to join their group, with her being the only female member. When, in 1963, Niki de Saint Phalle made the transition away from *Tirs*, she began to create sculptures in white plaster, some of which were deathly or disturbing as is the case with the series representing brides, hearts and even women giving birth. Her sculptures were made from cloth and wool over wire frames to which Niki de Saint Phalle often added salvaged objects. The women Niki de Saint Phalle depicted were still enchained by marriage or motherhood, and she was trying to set them free. By 1964, Niki de Saint Phalle embraced the "Nanas" series to again highlight female figures. These sculptures, in bold colours and with generous curves, symbolised the modern woman,

liberated from traditions. *Nanas* are black, yellow and pink, they are multiracial to reflect the world.

The artist dedicated a large part of her life to these monumental projects. Her sculptures turned into real architectural pieces: the *Golem* slide in Jerusalem in 1972 or *Hon*, the largest of the *Nanas* (28 m long), built by Niki in 1966 in Stockholm. She was actively involved in *Cyclope* (1969–1994) by Jean Tinguely at Milly-la-Forêt, near Paris. However, without doubt the Jardin des Tarots, a project in Tuscany which started in 1978, was her most comprehensive work. She self-financed the whole project and it took her more than 20 years to complete. Art may have saved her life, but the air that she breathed in as she created her polyester sculptures was the cause of lung problems which she would suffer from for the rest of her life. A year before her death in 2001, she donated many important works to MAMAC, a gesture which demonstrated her generosity and her commitment to others.

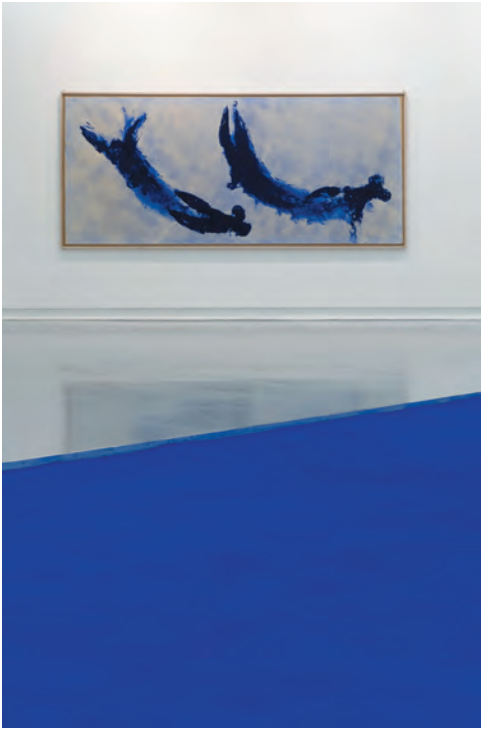
#### YVES KLEIN

##### The monochrome adventure

Explore a gallery, unique in in the world, dedicated to the master of the immaterial. Yves Klein was born in Nice in April 1928; his parents were both painters (Marie Raymond and Fred Klein). In 1946 he met Arman and the poet Claude Pascal in Nice, with whom he would share poetic adventures on the local beaches.

He learnt judo with Claude Pascal, (he would become 4th dan), and the two of them would stroll down the *Avenue Jean Médecin* in bare feet, dressed in white shirts with Klein's handprints and footprints on them. Klein and Arman were interested in zen philosophy, and it was on the wall of a cellar belonging to Arman's family where Klein painted his first blue *monochromes* between 1947–1948. In 1955, in Paris, he met Tinguely, César, Raysse and Restany, and at the *Salon des Réalités Nouvelles*, he showed a painting in a single colour, *Expression de l'univers de la couleur mine orange [Expression of the Universe of the Colour Lead Orange]*, (M60), 1955, signed "Yves le Monochrome", which was rejected and caused quite a stir.

From 1956 onwards, the "Yves : peintures" exhibitions followed: *Propositions Monochromes*, Gallery Colette Allendy in Paris, Yves Klein: *Proposte monocrome epoca blu*, in Milan and *Pigment pur* in 1957, again at the Gallery Allendy, during which he presented the practical applications of the "Blue period", after establishing an ultramarine blue, which would come to be known as IKB (*International Klein Blue*). It was in 1958, following the major media event that was the Vide exhibition at the Iris



Yves Klein, *Untitled Anthropometry*, (ANT 84), 1960, and "Dry pigments" installation. Photo Muriel Anssens © The Estate of Yves Klein, Adagp, Paris / MAMAC, Nice, 2019

Clert Gallery in Paris, where Klein presented a completely empty gallery; the walls were painted in white by the artist and the gallery window was painted blue. Hosted by his friend Robert Godet, on the Ile Saint-Louis, he orchestrated the first of his "living brushes" experiences, where nude female models were covered in blue paint and imprinted blank paper surfaces fixed to the floor.

The first *Anthropometries* were shown in public at the Galerie internationale d'Art contemporain in Paris in March 1960, with a performance in which three female nude models covered in blue paint, crawled and moved over the floor which was covered in paper for the occasion; the models also imprinted their bodies on the walls, under the direction of "conductor" Klein, to the sound of the *Monotone-Silence Symphony*. Klein died in June 1962 in Paris, leaving behind works of great lyrical depth, after having demonstrated the power of emptiness, sculpted water and fire, invented the architecture of air, etc. The evidence of this is in the "Cosmogonies" series, "moment-states of nature", recording the signs of atmospheric behaviour of canvases travelling on the roof of his car between Paris and Nice, an extension of his Athropometry work.

#### 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR

##### PLAY ON WORDS. PLAY ON SIGNS.

An iconic work of the MAMAC, La Cambra or «Ben's Museum» gives an account of the place of writing in the work of this essential artist. His smooth, untrammelled, almost childish

calligraphy takes us back to the winds of change and the art of attitude initiated in the late 1950s in Nice. Around this monumental work, other games with words, writings and languages are on display. On walls, paintings and sheets of paper, glyphs and alphabets are invented, anagrams, dance-poems, tags and crosswords are drawn. This exhibition combines works from the collection as well as loans and presentations by artists of different generations related to the museum's history. The relationship between the wall and writing is highlighted. The works engages the body of the viewer, reader, enunciator, or even actor. Some works have a very low profile and require visitors to pay attention, others shout out at them, take them to task, call on their imagination. The central question of deciphering them echoes that of understanding the work and the keys to interpreting it. While words call on the worlds of poetry and childhood, they engage an eminently political relationship with the world, on the place of the artist in our society.



Jean Dupuy, *Le Sagittaire*, 2007  
Oil on canvas, 200 × 200 cm  
Collection MAMAC, Nice, inv. 2007.6. Gift of the artist  
Photo Muriel Anssens, Ville de Nice – © ADAGP, Paris, 2019

#### AMERICAN ABSTRACT ART

Minimal art emerged in the United States in the mid-1960s.

With Minimalism, art was considered from a totally fresh perspective undergoing a radical transition that eschewed traditional conventions. The most remarkable aspect of this transformation was the new relationship between the spectator and the artwork, which reinvented the aesthetic perception of an object right down to its substance. Artworks monopolised the space, which became an existential space and no longer an aesthetic space. Previously, a piece of art occupied its own territory that was separate from the spectator. Minimal art opened up a new sphere of activity for the artist in which the consciousness of their own body in its relationship with the surrounding space predominated resulting in extra large canvases and the obsolescence of the plinth.

Minimalists explored geometric figures deducible one from the others (squares, rectangles,



triangles and so forth) and on the matters of volume, surface and flatness. Striving for maximum effect through the minimum of resources, these artists removed any trace of subjectivity in their work and often incorporated industrial materials and techniques.

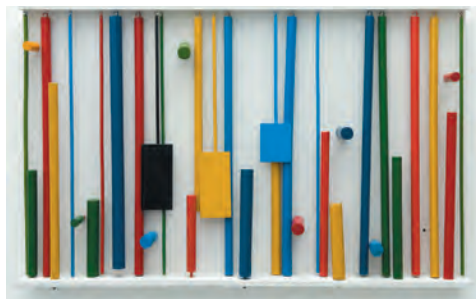
Proponents of the movement include: Donald Judd, Ellsworth Kelly, Robert Morris, Kenneth Noland, Franck Stella and Richard Serra.

Conceptual art emerged in the 1960s. It asserted the primacy of the idea over the object, to the extent that producing the work was no longer even strictly necessary. It pushed the bounds of the traditional artistic field by questioning the meaning and purpose of artistic practice. In 1969, Sol LeWitt declared: 'Ideas can be works of art. They are in a chain of development that may eventually find some form. All ideas need not be made physical.'

The following conceptual artists are featured in this room: Sol LeWitt, Joseph Kosuth, Robert Morris, James Lee Byars and Ed Ruscha.

## ALBERT CHUBAC

Albert Chubac was born in Geneva in 1925. Following his studies in Decorative Arts and Fine Art in Geneva, his work was influenced by some formative periods: his interest in Klee, Kandinsky, Miró, Matisse and Picasso; meeting Nicolas de Staël in 1950; and his travels in Italy, Spain, Greece, Egypt and Algeria.



Albert Chubac, Modifiable, 1967  
Wood, 85 x 135 x 18 cm  
Bought to the artist with help of FRAM  
MAMAC Collection, Nice, inv. 990.8.1  
Photo Muriel Anssens, Ville de Nice -  
© ADAGP, Paris, 2019

Exhibitions created with works from the MAMAC collection and invaluable help of : Yves Klein Archives, Centre national des arts plastiques (Paris), Jean Dupuy, Estate Robert Filliou, Peter Freeman, Inc. (New York/Paris), Jean-Baptiste Ganne, Eric Guichard, Arnaud Labelle-Rojoux, La succession Arman, Lilja Art Fund Foundation, Loevenbruck (Paris), Stéphanie Marin, Tania Mouraud, Niki Charitable Art Foundation, Emmanuel Régent, Sharing Art Foundation, Ben Vautier, Bernar Venet and collectors who wished to remain anonymous.

From his very first paintings, which were almost abstract, he used a palette of primary colors, applied in blocks. He then applied this technique to "transformable" wooden sculptures. The idea behind these sculptures was to enable the viewer to switch the elements around. In a later period, he explored the luminescent properties of colored Plexiglas.

In 2004, Albert Chubac donated around a hundred works to the City of Nice for the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art. The MAMAC showcased this donation in 2004, thus becoming the point of reference for the artist's work in France.

Albert Chubac died in Tourrette-Levens in 2008.



### DISCOVER AGAIN THE EXHIBITIONS...

- Lars Frederikson > November 16th 2019 – March 22nd 2020 (MAMAC) In collaboration with the Nouveau Musée National de Monaco
- Charlotte Pringuey-Cessac Autumn 2019 (Galerie contemporaine-MAMAC) In collaboration with the Musée de terra Amata, Nice.

### Events in 2020

- > Friday 17 January: ART ANNIVERSARY
- > June 20 & 21: WEEK END ANNIVERSARY MAMAC
- > Tuesday, October 27: Constitutive declaration of the manifesto of the new realists in 1960.
- > The permanent collection of the museum can be discovered at anytime on request or during a free visite. To prepare your visit, pedagogical tools are available and can be downloaded from our website under the «public» tab.

### Guided exhibition tours:

- > Guided tour for groups from Tuesday to Friday  
Price 82 euros per group (from 14 to 30 people)
- > Guided tour and workshops for schools and other structures from Tuesday to Friday.  
For the school classes/structures of Nice Côte d'Azur metropolitan area: free of charge!  
For the school classes/structures outside Nice Côte d'Azur metropolitan area: 20 euros!
- > Throughout the school year, the Môm'Art workshops for children (6–11 years old) take place every Wednesday from 3pm to 4.30pm and every Saturday from 11am to 12.30pm. Môm'Art Teenagers (12–18 years old) workshops can be set up on these slots on request.

### MUSÉE D'ART MODERNE ET D'ART CONTEMPORAIN

Place Yves Klein – Nice. +33 (0)4 97 13 42 01 – [www.mamac-nice.org](http://www.mamac-nice.org)  
Every day from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Closed on Mondays



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